FOREWORD

This is the 18th edition of the Defense Information School Broadcast Writing Style Guide. The purpose for this style guide is to provide both an introduction and a reference for military broadcast journalists. The primary audience is DINFOS students at all levels learning the art of broadcast writing. We consider this guide a Standard Operating Procedure for them. Our intent is to include all Department of Defense members who write and prepare broadcast news releases, features, spots, and public service announcements for military and civilian media as the guide's secondary audience.

We encourage both students and writers working in the field to use the margins we've provided to make notes.

Appendix B, the "sins" and "tips" of broadcast writing, is reprinted with permission from <u>Writing Broadcast News</u>; Mervin Block; Bonus Books, Inc., 160 East Illinois Street, Chicago, 1987.

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Contents

Defense Information School
Broadcast Writing Style Guide*

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BROADCAST WRITING:

You might argue it's about words. You could contend it's conceptual. You may claim it's an art or an in-borne talent. Perhaps you'd say it doesn't matter. What is "it"? "It" is **broadcast writing**, and it's really not as complex as it may seem. It's simply a communicative process. It's a process so unique that Andy Rooney once said, "No one speaks as he writes or writes as he speaks; writing for broadcast is a compromise between the two." It *is* unique but it *can* be learned. How? The same way you'd develop other skills – by repetition ... by practice ... by learning the rules and applying them until they become second nature – but never assumed. That's where this style guide comes in. It's designed to be your guide to improve your broadcast writing skills. Consider this a formal **welcome** to the wonderful world of broadcast writing!

WRITING FOR THE EAR:

David Brinkley once said that the ear is the least effective way to receive information. We may read well, and we may even receive the information we read well, but we're terrible listeners. Listening is a totally different way to receive information. As a broadcast writer, your challenge is to format that information for your listeners' ear so they can understand it the first – and most likely only – time they'll hear it.

THE SIX "C'S":

To help ensure you can successfully communicate using broadcast copy, you must learn and apply the six "Cs": **clear, concise, conversational, complete, current,** and **correct**.

CLEAR:

You must ensure your audience understands your copy the first time they hear it. Your listener cannot go back and read it. Work at writing in a simple, understandable style; write to express an idea, not to impress your audience. Basically limit sentences to one main thought. Don't make your listener work to understand your copy. Most won't bother.

CONCISE:

Broadcast copy is short. You must learn to express many thoughts in few words. Thomas Jefferson once said, "The most valuable of all talent is that of never using two words when one will do." Get to the main point. Use only essential words. Eliminate wordiness. Make your point and move on. It's kind of frustrating to read wordy, redundant copy, isn't it?

CONVERSATIONAL:

We basically "converse" using simple, common language. Why not *write* "for the ear" in the same style? Write a story much the same way you'd tell it to a friend. But, don't forget our Andy Rooney quote from the previous page.

COMPLETE:

Your copy must answer the five W's (who, what, where, when and why), except, perhaps, "why." That may be unknown at airtime. But don't raise new questions or leave old questions unanswered.

CURRENT:

Current copy is timely copy – both in content and the way it sounds. Last week's events, accidents, and incidents are not today's news. One way you can make your copy *sound* much more timely is by using (but not forcing) one of the present verb tenses whenever it's possible (and correct).

CORRECT:

You must ensure your copy is correct. This is the most important "C." Your copy *must* be free of factual errors. Double check for correct names, dates, times, etc. And don't forget that correct copy also means correct use of spelling and grammar. Learn the basic grammar rules, and use a dictionary.

BROADCAST NEWS STRUCTURE:

Broadcast news writing uses a different structure than print journalism. While the print journalist uses the inverted pyramid style, you'll employ the upright pyramid style. Instead of the summary lead, including the who, what, when, where, and why of the story, you'll focus on the central fact – or news peg – for your lead. Then, instead of using the print style of the facts in order of importance, you'll round out your story by completing the five "Ws." While the newspaper reporter might take 700 words to tell the story, you'll often have no more than 75 to 80. That's one reason why radio is considered the "alerting" or "headline" medium, newspapers the "informing" medium, and television (the dual-channel medium) the "involving" or "emotional" medium.

Note:
Print structure allows for editing a story to fit into the allotted space.

CONSTRUCTING THE BROADCAST SENTENCE:

Not only does story structure differ between print and broadcast journalism, so does the sentence structure within the story. You must learn to write in a more direct, conversational style. That means generally NOT starting a sentence with a long phrase or subordinate clause – especially your lead. You may also have to slightly modify the punctuation rules you learned in grammar school, and you must look at word usage in new ways.

WORD CHOICE:

Mark Twain once said, "There is as much difference between the right word and the almost-right word as between lightning and the lightning bug." Always an important process, choosing the right word becomes even more critical when you're writing for the ear.

VERBS:

The single most important word in a sentence is the verb. A verb is a word that expresses **action**, **state**, or **condition.** It provides the muscle in your sentence. Verbs come in various forms. There are *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs. *Auxiliary* verbs and *main* verbs combine to make *a verb phrase*. *Linking* verbs must have complements – they show a state or condition and do not convey action. Verbs can become *participles* ("verbal adjectives") or *gerunds* ("verbal nouns"). Your main concern is using the verb correctly by selecting the proper form. When you select which verb form to use, you must consider tense, person, number, voice, and mood.

TENSE:

There are six main verb tenses:

> *Present:* **THE COMMANDER *ARRIVES* TODAY.**
>
> *Past:* **THE COMMANDER *ARRIVED* LAST NIGHT.**
>
> *Future:* **THE COMMANDER *WILL ARRIVE* TOMORROW.**
>
> *Present Perfect:* **THE COMMANDER *HAS ARRIVED*.**
>
> *Past Perfect:* **THE COMMANDER *HAD ARRIVED* BEFORE....**
>
> *Future Perfect:* **THE COMMANDER *WILL HAVE ARRIVED*....**

The **present** tense indicates the action is happening now (to form the *present progressive*, replace "arrives" with "is arriving"). It is the preferred tense in broadcast writing … when it is correctly used. Use the **past** tense when you tie an event to a point in the past (many confuse past tense with passive voice, which *is caused* by sentence structure). The **future** tense indicates the event has not yet taken place. You can often use the present tense in place of the future tense. Even though it uses an auxiliary verb, the **present perfect** is still the second most preferred tense. Use it for something that has happened in the past but is still true. The **past perfect** and **future perfect** tenses both refer to events that have (past) or will have (future) taken place prior to something else happening. The broadcast writer rarely uses them.

PERSON:

Person refers to changes in the verb form according to its use in the first, second, or third person. For example:

    I run every morning. (1st person)

    You run every morning. (2nd person)

    He/she/it runs every morning. (3rd person)

Note that the verb form changes in the third person when compared to the first or second person.

NUMBER:

Number indicates whether the subject is singular or plural. For instance:

    We run on the track. (1st person *plural*)

    You run on the track. (2nd person *plural*)

    They run on the track. (3rd person *plural*)

Note that form remains the same as we conjugate the plural form of the verb, but also note that third person plural differs from third person singular.
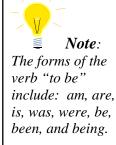
VOICE:

Voice refers to the relationship between the action, agent/actor, and recipient. Is the agent/actor performing the verb's action or is it being acted upon? What is the *direction* of the verb's action? Consider the following examples:

    Active: **THE THIEF STOLE THE HANDBAG.**

    Passive: **THE HANDBAG WAS STOLEN BY THE THIEF.**

Note the two separate factors that distinguish the above examples. First, in the active voice example, the action flows from the thief (agent) to the handbag (object). Also, the verb is past tense but has no auxiliary verb. In the passive example, the object becomes the "subject," and the actor follows the verb. The action flows in the opposite direction. A form of the "to be" verb is used as an auxiliary verb. Formed correctly, passive voice always has a verb phrase consisting of a form of the "to be" verb and a past participle.

Note:
"Voice" is only an issue with "action" verbs.

Note:
The forms of the verb "to be" include: am, are, is, was, were, be, been, and being.

ACTIVE VOICE ADVANTAGES:

Active voice has several advantages. For instance, it is more concise and more conversational. Active voice is stronger and clearer in meaning. Conversely, passive voice generally results in wordy, dull sentences.

IDENTIFYING PASSIVE VOICE:

You must learn to recognize passive voice before you can correct it. Consider the following three step process:

1. Identify the *verb*.
2. Identify who or what *is performing* the verb's action.
3. Identify the *direction* of the action.

For example:

THE HELICOPTER WAS LANDED BY THE MARINE.

We note the verb (was landed), identify performer of the action (Marine), and recognize the direction of the action (←———). This sentence is in the passive voice. Consider another example:

THE THIEF WAS ARRESTED BY THE POLICEMAN.

Locating the verb phrase (was arrested) and the actor (policeman) allows us to again identify the action's direction (←———) and identify another passive voice example. Passive sentence structure doesn't always include an actor. The above examples might have read:

THE HELICOPTOR WAS LANDED.

THE THIEF WAS ARRESTED.

The action is in the same direction; the sentences are still in the passive voice. Practice recognizing passive voice by evaluating these sentences:

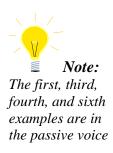**THE MARATHON WAS WON BY THE MASTER SERGEANT.**

THE CAR STRUCK THE SAILOR IN THE LEG.

THE TRIAL WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE JUDGE.

THE FAMILY MEMBERS WERE NOTIFIED.

THE INSTRUCTOR HAS LEFT SCHOOL FOR THE DAY.

A CROWD OF 20-THOUSAND SPECTATORS IS EXPECTED.

Note:
The first, third, fourth, and sixth examples are in the passive voice

RESTRUCTURING PASSIVE VOICE SENTENCES:

To restructure a passive voice sentence, you must:

1. Identify it!
2. Relocate the actor or identify the missing actor and insert it into the sentence.
3. Change the verb.

For example:

THE COLONEL WAS BITTEN BY THE DOG.

Is replaced by:

THE DOG BIT THE COLONEL.

You determine the first sentence is in the passive voice by noting the verb (verb phrase is "was bitten"), identify who is performing the action (the dog), and determining the direction of the action (the dog to the Colonel). Now, you simply locate the actor in front of the verb, drop the "to be" verb, and change the main verb from past participle to the simple past tense. Inserting the missing actor could be more difficult. You first must determine if you know who the actor is. For example:

THE HEADQUARTERS FLAG WAS STOLEN.

Before you can reconstruct this sentence, you must determine the missing actor. In this case, even if you don't know who stole the flag, you may still "insert the missing actor":

A THIEF STOLE THE HEADQUARTERS FLAG.

You may also be able to simply change the verb:

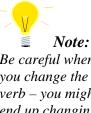**THE GUN WAS SOUNDED AT NOON.**

Becomes:

THE GUN FIRED AT NOON.

THE RACE WAS STARTED ON TIME.

Is less direct than:

THE RACE STARTED ON TIME.

Note:
Be careful when you change the verb – you might end up changing the meaning of the sentence, e.g., "The boy was bitten by the dog"; cannot become, "The boy bit the dog."

WHEN IT'S OK TO USE PASSIVE VOICE:

There are some instances when passive voice is preferred over active voice. For instance, when it's a *traditional phrase* normally spoken in the passive voice:

> **HE WAS BORN IN 1952.**

When the *"actor" is unknown* or you want to *hide the actor's identity*:

> **THE BOY WAS RESCUED FROM THE BURNING CAR.**
>
> **THE DOOR WAS LEFT UNLOCKED.** (By me!)

When the *receiver of the action is clearly more important that the actor*:

> **THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN SHOT.**   (OR)
>
> **THE WRITING INSTRUCTOR HAS BEEN FIRED.**

MOOD:

Refer to the grammar appendix for information on the indicative, imperative and subjunctive moods.

CHOOSING SIMPLE WORDS:

WRITING FOR THE EAR:

Writing for the ear means using words that are conversational and easily understood. For example, would you ask to "utilize" or "use" the computer? Do YOU ask someone to "consummate" a form or "complete" it? Would you report on a "conflagration" or a "fire"? Writing for the ear means using those same simple words when you write for your audience.

NEGATIVE WORD CHOICE:

Would you rather be told to write in a positive manner or <u>not</u> to write in a negative manner? If you're like most people, you'll react more positively if you're told to write in a positive manner. Tell your audience about the general's plans to stay at his home station instead of his promise NOT to go anywhere. Replacing phrases like "did not remember" with "forgot" also adds to the conversational style and removes the possibility that the "not" will somehow *not* reach your listener's ear.

CLICHÉS:

How many times have we heard a newscaster use the phrase "autopsy to determine the cause of death"? How many wasted words are in the phrase "in the month of February"? Is it really necessary to say "in the city of…."?

OTHER MEANINGLESS WORDS:

Some other meaningless words include conjunctive adverbs – like *meanwhile, meantime,* and *incidentally*. Don't rely on these crutches as transitions. Work on a more natural flow of ideas. And don't forget to avoid *latter, former,* and *respectively*. Your listener can't refer back to your original reference.

JARGON AND SLANG:

To you "R and R" might mean "rest and relaxation," but to someone else it might be the name of their hometown bowling alley. And which term sounds more professional, "re-up" or "re-enlistment"? Would the civilians in your audience more easily understand "2100 hours" or "this evening at 9:00"? Avoid using jargon, slang, and military time.

FOREIGN PHRASES:

Also beware of foreign phrases. Some of the better known words or phrases common to the country you're stationed in might complement your spot or feature script quite nicely, but they'll probably detract from your hard news story. They could also totally confuse your listener.

Note: Be careful not to confuse terms that may or may not mean the same. For instance, if a jury finds a defendant "not guilty", he is not necessarily "innocent."

CONTRACTIONS:

We use contractions naturally in day-to-day conversations. "It's" replaces "it is" and "there is" becomes "there's." Contractions also add to the conversational delivery of broadcast copy. There are exceptions. One is the use of it'll, which sounds awkward in a broadcast sentence. Also, remember that contractions tend to de-emphasize words. If you must emphasize a word, do *not* contract it. Someone in your audience could easily miss the key part in the statement, "The jury has declared that the defendant isn't guilty." There are other examples you must evaluate on a case-by-case basis.

PRONOUNS:

Note:
And don't forget, "it's" is NOT the possessive!

Beware of vague pronouns. When you use a pronoun in broadcast copy, be sure there is no question what its antecedent is. If there is any chance of confusion, repeat the noun the pronoun replaces.

"HERE" AND "THERE":

Where are *here* and *there* to your audience? Is *here* inside the radio studio? To your listener, isn't *here* where they are at that moment? The wider your broadcast area, the greater the possibility of confusion. Whether "here" is Baltimore or "there" is Baltimore, just say Baltimore.

ALLITERATION AND SIBILANCE:

If you compose a sentence with several words beginning with the same letter, you have alliteration that needlessly challenges the announcer. For example:

        WESTERLY WINDS WILL WHIP WINDSOR WEDNESDAY.

You'd have a similar problem with sibilance, which is alliteration with an "s":

        SEVEN SLIMEY SNAKES SLOWLY SLITHERED SOUTHWARD.

Sibilance can also appear at the end of words ... especially when you have a series of words that use an apostrophe to show possession:

        THE AIRMAN'S HAT COVERS THE LIEUTENANT'S DESK.

ACRONYMS:

Your audience no doubt knows what *NASA, NATO,* and even *OPEC* are, but have they ever heard of *DINFOS*? Be sure you spell out an unfamiliar acronym when you use it for the first time.

> `THE DEFENSE INFORMATION SCHOOL, OR DINFOS....`

This example illustrates one of the few times it's beneficial to split a sentence's subject and verb with a clarifying phrase.

ABBREVIATIONS:

It's quiz time. Guess what the following abbreviations stand for: GySgt, bros., SMSgt, Pres., CPO, IA. Chances are you did not immediately know the abbreviations stand for Gunnery Sergeant, brothers, Senior Master Sergeant, President, Chief Petty Officer, and Iowa. Chances are the person reading your copy won't know either. The list of abbreviated words you should consists of titles of personal address: **Mr., Mrs.,** and **Dr.** It also includes common names and titles like **Y-M-C-A, C-I-A, C-B-S,** and **N-C-O-I-C**. Whatever you do, don't *presume* the person reading your copy knows that USAF means U-S Air Force or ft. means fort. Write them out.

INITIALS AND MIDDLE NAMES:

Omit a person's middle initial unless the letter is part of a well-known name, like **Michael J. Fox, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy,** or **George C. Scott**.

FINDING THE RIGHT WORD:

If the defendant in a murder trial is acquitted, is it the same as saying he's innocent? Do you really want to call that female in your radio spot announcement "chick" or a "babe"? Chick may be a compliment for you, but does it carry a positive meaning to all the members of your audience? Experts estimate that as much as 75% of meaning is lost in the communication process. You need to minimize misunderstanding, so carefully consider the right word that carries the meaning you want *your audience* to receive.

Note:
The bottom line is, know your audience!

SENTENCE STRUCTURE:

Keep sentence structure simple – basically one idea to one sentence. Edit your compound-complex sentence down to two or three simple sentences. Think about it – if your sentence meanders, what is your listener's attention doing? Consider the following:

> AN AIR FORCE HELICOPTER AND A NAVY FIGHTER JET
> COLLIDED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:40 THIS AFTERNOON
> AT 35-HUNDRED FEET 40 MILES NORTH OF TYNDALL
> AIR FORCE BASE NEAR PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA,
> KILLING BOTH PILOTS, WHO WERE 30-YEARS OLD AND
> 27-YEARS OLD RESPECTIVELY.

That lead sentence is full of facts, but does the way the writer jammed the facts into one sentence make sense to your listener? Probably not. How would you rewrite that sentence using a simpler structure? Perhaps:

> AN AIR FORCE HELICOPTER AND A FIGHTER JET
> COLLIDED THIS AFTERNOON NEAR TYNDALL AIR FORCE
> BASE, KILLING BOTH PILOTS.

SENTENCE LENGTH:

Adhere to the 20/25 rule, which limits hard-news story leads to 20 words and all other hard-news story sentences to 25 words. But also remember to vary your sentence length. If you constantly write short sentences, your copy will sound choppy. If you always write long, wordy sentences, your copy will drag. Try to develop a rhythm by combining short and long sentences.

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES:

Avoid starting a sentence with a participial phrase, and virtually never start a story with a one. You're backing into the story if you do. It's normally best to establish the subject at the beginning of your sentence. For instance:

> BEGINNING THIS WEEK, THE CHAPEL WILL START
> HOLDING SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES.

Note:
For a review of phrases and participles, see the grammar appendix.

Instead, why not write:

THE CHAPEL WILL START HOLDING SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES THIS WEEK.

When you do start a sentence with a participial phrase, the subject of the main sentence must match the preceding phrase.

CLAUSES:

You must also remember to remain clear and conversational in your use of clauses. For instance, normal print sentence structure often finds a dependent clause preceding an independent clause.

BECAUSE HE JOINED THE MARINES AT AN EARLY AGE, THE STAFF SERGEANT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCEL.

But, to the ear, it's clearer and more natural to write:

THE STAFF SERGEANT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCEL BECAUSE HE JOINED THE MARINES AT AN EARLY AGE.

And beware of separating a sentence's subject and verb with a non-essential clause.

THE AIR BASE GROUP COMMANDER, WEARY FROM LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATING IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL, SAYS SHE'S HAPPY TO BE HOME.

Why not restructure your sentence or divide the sentence into two separate sentences?

> **WEARY FROM LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATING IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL, THE AIR BASE GROUP COMMANDER SAYS SHE'S HAPPY TO BE HOME.**
>
> *or*
>
> **THE AIR BASE GROUP COMMANDER SAYS SHE'S WEARY BUT HAPPY TO BE HOME AFTER LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATING IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL.**
>
> *or*
>
> **THE AIR BASE GROUP COMMANDER IS WEARY FROM LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATING IN THE NATIONS CAPITAL. SHE SAYS SHE'S HAPPY TO BE HOME.**

Remember that it's better to use simple, declarative sentences with simple subject-verb-object order. Also remember, to avoid confusion, generally place dependent clauses after independent clauses.

PUNCTUATION:

Use punctuation in your broadcast script to aid readability and clarify meaning. Do this by following the same basic rules you learned in grammar school, with a few exceptions. For instance, you'll add the otherwise optional comma prior to the coordinating conjunction in a series of three or more. This helps clarify meaning. The comma is just one of using seven different forms of broadcast punctuation. The others include the ***period, comma, hyphen, dash, quotation mark, parenthesis,*** and ***ellipsis***. You may also use the ***exclamation point,*** but not in a "hard news" story. DINFOS style does not employ either the colon or the semi-colon.

A ***period*** indicates the end of a sentence or thought. Stop; breathe; move on. Be sure to place two spaces after each period in your broadcast script.

A ***comma*** indicates a pause shorter than a period. Continue to use commas to set off names of geographical areas and most items in dates and addresses.

The **_hyphen_** helps you phrase difficult words and separate elements.

> `RE-APPLY, RE-EVALUATE, W-B-I-G, U-C-L-A, A-M`

Do <u>not</u> hyphenate or divide words at the end of a line. Spell out the entire word, or move it to the next line.

Use the **_dash_** to set off parenthetical expressions.

> `UNESCO – THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,`
>
> `SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION – MET....`

Type the dash as two hyphens placed together with a space on both sides (the hyphen is a single stroke with no space on either side). Microsoft Word will automatically combine the two hyphens into a slightly longer dash.

Use **_quotation marks_** to indicate quotes, or set off nicknames, book or movie titles, or any "cute" phrase that might create a stumble for the announcer.

> `THE U-H-ONE "HUEY" IS A VIETNAM-ERA, UTILITY`
>
> `HELICOPTER USED FOR TRANSPORTING....`

Parentheses in broadcast copy contain unspoken information. You normally do not read material in parentheses aloud. Parenthetical data in broadcast copy include notes to the announcer such as phonetics and a particular time (today, tomorrow, month, and day). You may or may not read this data aloud.

> `MEET COMMANDER DIXIER (DEE-`<u>`SEE`</u>`-YAY) AT THE....`
>
> `THE ACTION STARTS FRIDAY (TOMORROW/TODAY)....`
>
> `THE FAIR BEGINS AT 1:00 SATURDAY (JUNE 4TH).`

The **_ellipsis_** is a series of three dots indicating a pause longer than a comma. The pause is for dramatic effect. This Paul Harvey type pause is part of the colorful writing used in spots and features.

> `SHE NEVER FORGOT HER FAVORITE WRITING`
>
> `INSTRUCTOR ... PETTY OFFICER TERRY MINTON.`

You'll very rarely use the **_exclamation point_** in broadcast writing. You might use it with the imperative mood in a selling spot, but you'd never use an exclamation point in a hard news story.

Note:
Learn more about "mood" in the grammar appx.

QUOTATIONS AND ATTRIBUTION:

Your listener cannot see the quotation marks in your copy. If you feel you must use a direct quote, alert your listener it's coming.

> **"I AM NOT A CROOK," THE PRESIDENT SAID.**

When your audience first hears that statement, they have no way of knowing it's not the announcer claiming not to be a crook. There's a good chance they'll become confused and miss part of your story.

> **THE PRESIDENT SAID, IN HIS WORDS, "I AM NOT A CROOK."**

Unless the quote is very dynamic, you'll probably want to paraphrase it.

> **THE PRESIDENT SAYS HE IS NOT A CROOK.**

Remember to identify the source of your quote or paraphrase up front. Alert your audience that a quote is next, and begin the quote with the source. You'll also want to avoid using long quotes. Again, the best move you can make is to paraphrase. And if it's necessary to *link* a second statement with the speaker, use a conversational, clarifying phrase.

> **THE ADMIRAL ALSO SAID....**

Some newscasters use "quote" and "unquote" to lead into and go out of quotes, a habit that is un-conversational and unnecessary. When you begin your quote with the source, your listeners will understand who said what.

<p align="center">Instead of:</p>

> **THE FIRE CHIEF SAID, QUOTE, "THE BLAZE STARTED IN THE KITCHEN."**

<p align="center">Why not say:</p>

> **THE FIRE CHIEF SAYS THE BLAZE STARTED IN THE KITCHEN.**

That way, you're giving *attribution* to a key piece of information without dragging down the sentence – or your listener's mind. Don't worry about attributing the source if the facts are obvious or or easily verified.

Note:

Remember to avoid direct quotations ... paraphrase when possible (with attribution up front!).

TITLES AND NAMES:

Avoid starting a broadcast story with a person's name. Definitely avoid using the name of an *unfamiliar* individual unless you're striving for a special effect – a very rare instance in *news* writing. When you use names and titles together, remember to put the *title* ahead of the *name*.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM PERRY SAYS....

Instead of:

WILLIAM PERRY, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SAYS....

Notice that when you place the title before the name, you don't use commas. Your sentence flows much more naturally and quickly.

CONSTRUCTING THE BROADCAST NEWS STORY:

It bears repeating that the structure of a **broadcast news story** differs from a **print story**. The print story is written in the "inverted pyramid" style. The who, what, when, where, why, and how are usually included in the *summary* lead. The print journalist then unfolds the rest of the facts in descending order of importance. Conversely, you'll write the **broadcast story** in the "upright pyramid" style. At the peak is the news peg – the single most important fact (what happened). You add the remaining four "Ws" and the how to the body to complete the news story.

The Commitment/Focus Statement:

Before you start to write your news story, pick the main actor, action, and recipient, and then use them to shape a focus statement. For example, in a public affairs broadcast release about a plane crash that killed seven airmen at Dover AFB, Delaware, you decide the main actor is "crash," the main action verb is "kills," and the recipient is "airmen." Your focus statement becomes:

CRASH KILLS AIRMEN

Everything you write about this story should relate to your focus/commitment statement. If you have written that statement well, you can maintain the same structure – actor, action, and recipient – in your slug/tease and lead.

Note:
Remember to place attribution before assertion and title before name.

The Slugline/Tease:

Depending on the policy at your station, the slugline can vary in length from one to ten words. The DINFOS standard is up to ten words for a *news* story slug. This allows the slug to double as a "tease." This also ensures you can not only include *what* happened in ten words or less, you should also be able to include *where* it happened if it is a local story.

> *(Yes)* `DOVER AIR CRASH KILLS SEVEN AIRMEN`
>
> *(No)* `AN AIR FORCE PLANE HAS CRASHED`

Both slugs consist of six words. But, notice that in the first example the slug is localized (Dover AFB), the "what" is clearly spelled out (air crash and seven dead airmen), and the non-essential words (articles and helping verbs) are omitted. Like a newspaper headline, it's common to write the "hard news" slugline in the simple present tense. Use shorter topical sluglines for feature stories and spot announcements. Keep those slugs to three words maximum.

The Lead:

Your lead, or *first sentence* in a broadcast news release, is designed to gain the listener's attention, inform him of what happened, and prepare her for what's to come. All that in the DINFOS standard of **20 words or less.**

> `A DOVER AIR FORCE BASE PLANE CRASH HAS KILLED SEVEN AIRMEN AND INJURED TEN OTHERS.`

This lead is localized (Dover AFB), the "what" is included (plane crash), and the result is revealed (killed seven Airmen and injured ten others) ... all in well under 20 words! You've captured your listener's attention with the impact (military deaths), told them what happened, and prepared them for the rest of the facts. Notice how we did NOT write the lead:

> `SEVEN AIRMEN WERE KILLED AND TEN OTHERS INJURED IN A DOVER AIR FORCE BASE AIRCRAFT CRASH THIS MORNING.`

This structure not only puts the key statistic (seven) in a place where it might be missed by your listener (who may not be actively listening for the first word of the story), it is written in the passive voice (were killed).

You normally want to **localize your lead**. Stating the local tie brings a greater impact to your audience. The local media let the national networks handle the general wartime updates during "Desert Storm." The local market stations focused on the impact the war had on their communities.

You generally don't use **questions or quotations** in hard news story leads. A question lead might make your copy read like a public service announcement, and a quotation lead is hard for your listener to tune in to. Save question leads for "soft news" and feature stories (except for the occasional rhetorical question as an attention-getting device), and paraphrase quotes important enough for the lead (unless it's an extremely important quote like President Nixon's "I am not a crook" comment). Question and quotation leads may alert the listener to what's ahead, but they generally lack the depth of a general "what happened" lead.

Finally, recognize the difference between *hard* and *soft* **leads** and when to use one over the other. Strongly consider using soft leads for lighter news stories and sports, e.g., instead of directly providing the game's outcome....

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THE BREMERSTEIN "BEARCATS" CONTINUE TO DOMINATE
THE ALL-EUROPE BASKETBALL LEAGUE.
```

The Body:

After you've written the lead, work on logically developing the specifics of the story in the body. Logical development simply means *orderly* continuing of the facts to flow smoothly to the story's conclusion. Remember, you're a storyteller. Try asking yourself what your listener wants to know next. Then deliver. Your development may or may not be in descending order of importance. Learn the art of "transitioning" between ideas without relaying on crutches – like conjunctive adverbs. The body of the story must deliver the goods you've introduced in the lead. And, most of all, do not forget that you're writing for your listener's ear, i.e., conversationally.

The "Snapper":

All stories have a beginning (lead), middle (body), and an end. We call the end of the news story the "snapper." The snapper is the last sentence in your story. It brings the story to a solid, *logical* conclusion. It may contain a new fact, but a properly written snapper never raises any new questions. Don't underestimate its importance. Next to the lead, the snapper is the most important element in a news story.

The Feature:

The feature story provides a change of pace in newscasts. Features are generally longer than "hard" news stories and most often focus on "soft-news" items. You'll find feature ideas all around your installation. From the local sports hero or model airplane buff, to the opera singer, scholar, or scoutmaster, features concentrate on the **human interest** story angle. While you use very few, if any, modifiers in your "hard" news writing, features are a great opportunity to let your creative writing juices flow. These stories don't have a hard news peg. They depend on your ability to use a kaleidoscope of description. Concentrate on using dynamic, intense, *descriptive* words with precise meanings. Continue to use action verbs in the active voice as you paint mental pictures.

THE FEATURE LEAD:

Attracting your listener's attention is every bit as important in the feature story as it is in the "hard" news release. The feature story lead, or "attention step," does not include the principle of telling "what" happened. This makes it even more critical to look for the best angle for the lead to arouse your audiences' interest and get them involved in your story.

THE FEATURE DEVELOPMENT:

Good features don't just happen; you create them through skillful planning and writing. Features demand skillful development if you hope to make them effective. Pick a main idea and stick to it. Don't sell yourself, or your listener, short by relaying on transitional words and phrases. Work on smooth, logically developed transitions.

THE TELLING POINT:

Remember that all stories have a beginning, a body, and an end. We call the end – or final sentence – of the feature the "telling point." It must illustrate the central theme or information objective of your story, and it often "ties back" to the lead by paraphrasing or re-stating the same idea.

Note: Remember, the final sentence in a "hard" news story is called the "snapper."

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Spot Announcements/PSA's:

What costs over two million dollars and lasts for less than 30 seconds? A commercial during the Super Bowl! Do you really think commercial advertisers would pay such large sums of money if they didn't believe in the power of advertising? You've got that same power – the power of the television and radio spot announcement – at your disposal. The difference is that you're generally selling a service or an idea instead of a product. Your job is to convince your audience to start exercising or stop smoking, not to drink a certain soft drink or beer.

TYPES OF SPOTS:

There are two types of spot announcements: s**elling** and *information*. You tell your listener to take a specific action in the selling spot, but take more of a "soft-sell" approach in an information spot. You'll want to keep the sentence length short – no more than 20 words – in both types of spots.

SELLING SPOTS:

The selling spot both informs your listeners *and* tells them to do something. A selling spot has three steps: attention, appeal, and action. The *attention* step must grab your listener's attention and set the tone for the spot. It might be a startling fact or statistic, a question, or a sound effect. Anything that gains your listeners' attention and prepares them for what's to come. The *appeal* step (body of the spot) tells your listeners what's in it for them. It's called the appeal step because you'll address a specific appeal, or need, that your audience has. The *action* step demands some kind of activity. Even if you write to motivate your listener to some kind of action throughout, be sure to include a specific call to action in the last sentence of your spot.

> *Note:*
> The DINFOS standard for action steps is 6 words or less.

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BUY YOUR SAVINGS BONDS TODAY!

ATTEND THIS WEEK'S STOP SMOKING SEMINAR!

COME TO THE FAIR!

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB!
```

INFORMATION SPOTS:

The information spot informs your listener without any direct call to action. Of course, the information you present should start your listener thinking about acting, but you do not address the action specifically.

Editing Broadcast Copy:

Even in this age of creating and editing a story on the word processor and then watching that story turn into a hard copy on your laser printer, you will occasionally be forced to make "pen and ink" corrections. By following a few simple rules, you can ensure your copy remains readable.

INSERTING PUNCTUATION:

When you insert that missing period, quotation mark, comma, question mark, etc., neatly place the mark where it belongs.

CORRECTING SPELLING:

Never try to correct a letter within a word. Block out the misspelled word and write the corrected word on top of the block. There is no editing mark in broadcast copy to correct a single letter.

INSERTING WORDS OR PHRASES:

Insert a word or phrase by printing word or words above the line and indicating the point you want to insert it. Above all, be neat!

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WRITING NUMBERS IN BROADCAST STYLE:

1 thru 11: ONE; TWO; THREE (i.e., spell out)

12 thru 999: 12; 131; 614 (spell out to start sentence, e.g., *Forty-three others remain hospitalized in serious condition.*"

Over 1000: 125-THOUSAND; ONE-THOUSAND-25; 15-HUNDRED (combination of first two number rules)

Dates: AUGUST 1ST; JULY 4TH; DECEMBER 25TH

Years: 1492; 1999; FOUR B-C; 2002

Money: 12-THOUSAND DOLLARS; ONE-MILLION DOLLARS

Fractions: TWO-THIRDS; ONE-HALF; THREE-QUARTERS

Percentages: SIX-PERCENT; 79-PERCENT; 100-PERCENT

Phone Numbers: 6-7-7-4-4-7-4; EXTENSION 4-4-7-4

Addresses: 17-17 9TH STREET; 104 NORTH 23RD

Buildings: BUILDING 400; BARRACKS ONE

Ages: NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY; 48-YEAR-OLD FORMER G-I

Time: 8:00 THIS MORNING (OR, 8:00 A-M); 11:15 P-M; NOON or MIDNIGHT (never 12:00 A-M or 12:00 P-M)

Decimals: 13-POINT-SEVEN; SIX-POINT-25; 98-POINT-SIX

Roman Numerals: LOUIS THE 16TH; POPE JOHN PAUL THE 2ND

Ratings: NUMBER THREE TEAM; NOW RANKED 13TH

Scores: 7 - 3; 28 - 19; 119 - 118; 8-TO-NOTHING

Pay Grades: E-2; E-9; O-3; O-6; G-S-12; W-G-4

License Plates: 1-2-2-A-N-L; 9-3-K-2-9-7; E-U-R-10-13-T

Military Units: 2ND FLEET; 11TH CORPS; 5TH SQUADRON

Equipment: M-16 RIFLE; C-FIVE "GALAXY"; M-ONE TANK; U-H-ONE "HUEY" HELICOPTER; M-17-A MASK

URLs "DINFOS-DOT-O-S-D-DOT-MIL"

Length: 13-FEET-TWO-INCHES; SIX-FEET-SIX-INCHES

Ordinal Numbers: 1ST; 2ND; 3RD; 20TH; 51ST; 102ND

ENGLISH GRAMMAR REVIEW

1. *The eight parts of speech are*:
   - Noun
   - Pronoun
   - Verb
   - Adverb
   - Adjective
   - Conjunction
   - Preposition
   - Interjection

2. *What is a noun?*
   - A noun is a word that can be the name of:
     - A person - boy, girl, Rita, etc.
     - An animal - bull, horse, Trigger, etc.
     - A place - island, city, Baltimore, etc.
     - A thing - map, sea, sun, etc.
     - An event - marriage, graduation, murder, etc.
     - An idea or concept - war, peace, virtue, etc.
   - A *subject* is the primary noun or pronoun in the sentence

3. *What is a verb?*
   - A verb is a word that expresses an action, state, or condition
   - Verb form (the way it is spelled) changes according to:
     - Tense: present, past, future, etc.
       (Discussed in main style guide, page 4)
     - Person: 1ST, 2ND, 3RD
       (Discussed in main style guide, page 5)
     - Number: singular or plural
       (Discussed in main style guide, page 5)
     - Voice: active or passive
       (Discussed in main style guide, page 5-8)
     - Mood: Form of the verb that shows the attitude of the writer/speaker
       - Indicative (Used to state a fact or opinion or ask a question)
         - "The game begins at 7:00."
         - "What time is it?"
       - Imperative (Expresses a command or warning or makes a request)
         - "Get ready to sail!"
         - "Let's get out of here!"
       - Subjunctive (Reverses basic rules for tense)
         - "If I *were* you, I'd see the Commander right away."
         - "I demanded that the Airman *come* to see me."
         - "He's so fine; wish he were mine."

- Some texts include Infinitive and Participial as moods
- A participle is

4. *What is a __pronoun__?*
   - A pronoun is a word used in place of one or more nouns
   - There are seven types of pronouns:
     - Personal - "<u>I</u> am going to the store."
     - Reflexive - "He saw <u>himself</u> in the mirror."
     - Interrogative - "<u>Who</u> is coming?"
     - Demonstrative - "<u>That</u> is beautiful."
     - Possessive - "The house is <u>mine</u>."
     - Relative - "The God <u>who</u> made the universe is all-powerful."
     - Indefinite - "<u>Someone</u> is coming."

5. *What is an __adjective__?*
   - An adjective is a word that modifies a noun or a pronoun
   - There are five types of adjectives:
     - Descriptive - "Steph is a <u>fast</u> runner."
     - Possessive - "Jenny loves <u>her</u> papa."
     - Interrogative - "<u>Which</u> sax is Amanda's?"
     - Demonstrative - "<u>That</u> woman is my wife."
     - Infinite - "<u>Some</u> people are lucky."

NOTE: The articles (a, an, & the) are considered adjectives. "A" and "an" are called "indefinite" articles and can only be used in the singular sense. "The" is called the "definite" article because it is usually used to refer to a specific person, place, or thing.

6. *What is an __adverb__?*
   - An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb
   - Adverbs indicate manner, quantity, time, place, and intensity
     - Adverbs of manner answer the question "how", e.g., "The fire <u>rapidly</u> consumed the barracks."
       (Very common adverbs recognized by their "ly" ending)
     - Adverbs of quantity, degree, or intensity answer the question of "how much" or "how well", e.g., "The squad advanced <u>fearfully</u>."
     - Adverbs of time answer the question "when", e.g., "The president plans to announce his Bosnian policy <u>soon</u>."
     - Adverbs of place answer the question "where", e.g., "The police found the convict <u>under the bridge</u>."

7. *What is a __conjunction__?*
   - A conjunction is a word that joins words or groups of words
   - There are three types of conjunctions:
     - Coordinating (and, but, or, nor, yet, and for)
     - Subordinating (although, because, if, that, etc.)
     - Correlative (coordinating conjunctions used in pairs - either/or; etc.)

NOTE: There are also "conjunctive adverbs." These are actually adverbs that act as a conjunction to connect complete ideas. Examples are "therefore", "furthermore", and "however." The use of conjunctive adverbs is discouraged in broadcast writing.

8. *What is a **preposition**?*
   - A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in the sentence
   - Prepositions may indicate position, direction, time, manner, means, or agent
   - Prepositions combine with "objects of the preposition" to form prepositional phrases
   - Prepositional phrases can:
     - Show position ("Police kept the convict <u>in the basement</u>.")
     - Show direction ("The robber gave the money <u>to the police</u>.")
     - Show time ("Superman lived on Krypton <u>for many years</u>.")
     - Show manner ("The chief acted <u>with disgust</u>.")
     - Show means ("The boy hit the dog <u>with a stick</u>.")
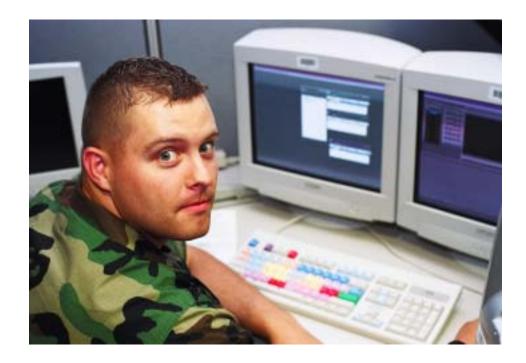   - Show agent ("The student was given a failing grade <u>by the instructor</u>.")

9. *What is an <u>interjection</u>?*
   - An interjection is an expression of strong feeling or emotion.
   - Words that do not fulfill any function of the other 7 parts of speech.
     - Frequently used ("<u>Man</u>, am I hungry!")
     - Not properly part of the sentence structure ("<u>Yes</u>, I'll do it")
     - Separated from the main clause by a comma ("<u>Ah</u>, she is beautiful.")

10. **Sentences, Phrases and Clauses**
    - A <u>sentence</u> is the expression of a thought that usually consists of at least of a subject and a verb.
    - Sentence types include: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.
      - Simple is self-explanatory
        - "The Air Force grooms the best NCOs in the U.S. military."
        - "Green Bay won." (no object)
      - Compound consists of two simple sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction. ("Emmett fell on his face, and Troy landed on his bottom.")
      - Complex has a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. ("Although the Packers were beaten, Brett played well.")
      - Compound-complex contains at least two main clauses, and at least one subordinate clause. DO NOT use these sentences in broadcast writing!
    - A <u>phrase</u> consists of two or more words that express a thought, but without a subject or a conjugated verb. You can identify the phrase by the type of word at its beginning.
      - "Jon will run the race ***with*** <u>his son</u>." (prepositional phrase)
      - "***According*** to the Red Cross, the blood supply is critically low." (participial phrase)

- "You have the classroom ***near*** the door." (adjective phrase)
- "Ensure the students write ***in*** their own words." (adverbial phrase)
- "Don't try ***to*** win the race dishonestly." (infinitive phrase)
- "The day ***has*** begun." (verb phrase)
- A <u>clause</u> is a group of words that contains a subject and a conjugated verb
  - The clause can form part of a compound or complex sentence
  - There are two types of clauses
    - The main, or independent, clause (could stand alone)
      - "Before you tape your interview, <u>you should thoroughly check your equipment</u>."
      - "<u>Chief Louis lost the interview</u> because she showed up late."
  - The subordinate, or dependent, clause (not a complete sentence)
    - "Lindsay won the race <u>because he came in first</u>."
    - "<u>If A1C Donald passes broadcast writing</u>, he'll go to radio."

"SINS" AND "TIPS" OF
BROADCAST WRITING

"'DOZEN' DEADLY SINS":

1. Don't start a story with "as expected"
   (Don't listeners tune in to hear the "unexpected"?)
2. Don't start a story with "in a surprise move"
   (Isn't news full of "surprises"?)
3. Don't start a story by saying someone "is making news," "is in the news," or "is dominating the news"
   - Just tell what's happening
   - Isn't everyone you mention in the newscast "making news," etc.?
4. Don't start a story by saying, "A new development tonight in the...."
   (If it's not new, or a new development, it probably isn't news)
5. Don't characterize news as "good," "bad," "interesting," or "disturbing"
   - Let your listener decide if it's good, bad, etc.
   - Was the plunge in oil prices good news for folks in Texas?
6. Don't *start a story* with a participial phrase or a dependent clause
   - We don't talk that way
   - It can cause copy to become "weak and murky"
   - Can cause confusion
   - S-V-O (subject-verb-object) order is the best pattern for your first sentence
7. Don't start a story with a quotation
   (Your listeners will presume the words are those of the announcer)
8. Don't start a story with any form of the verb "to be"
   - They're dead phrases that employ linking verbs
   - Use active verbs in the active voice
9. Don't start a story with the name of an unknown or unfamiliar person
   - Is the unknown person the reason you're telling the story?
   - Most stories don't even need a name
10. Don't start a story with a personal pronoun
    ("It" is a "premature" (vague) pronoun)
11. Don't write a first sentence that uses "yesterday"
    (Yesterday is gone ... update that lead to read from today's perspective)
12. Don't write a first sentence that uses the verb "continues"
    (It doesn't tell your listener anything new)
13. Don't start a story with "another," "more," or "once again"
    (Why listen to more of the same?)
14. Don't start a story with a sentence that has a "no" or "not"
    - People respond more positively to positive statements
    - "Recast" the negative into a positive
15. Don't cram too much information into a story
    (Your audience simply cannot process the constant flow of facts)

16. Don't use newspaper constructions
    (Attribution before assertion)
17. Don't lose or fail to reach a listener
    - Talk to your listener, not at him
    - Understand that good writing is hard work
    - "Easy writing, hard listening. Hard writing, easy listening."
18. Don't make a factual error
    (Causes a loss of authority and credibility)

"'VENIAL' SINS":

1. Don't use pre-fabricated phrases – they quickly become boring and trite
    - "It's official," "It shouldn't come as any surprise," "Believe it or not," etc.
    - "Police are investigating," "Only time will tell," "Don't count him out yet," etc.
    - "In a prepared statement," "In an abrupt about-face," "None the worse for wear," etc.
2. Don't waste words – it's a waste of time and waters down what you say
    - "'literally' walked off the field
    - "'suddenly' fell off the bridge"
    - "'flatly' denied"
3. Don't use *non-broadcast* words
    - Don't use a word that's not likely to be readily understood by almost all listeners
    - If you suspect a word is a "non-broadcast" word, you're probably right

4. Don't use *hollow* words – they do nothing but take up time
    - "the shooting 'incident'" is just "the shooting"
    - "thunderstorm 'activity'" is better stated "thunderstorms"
5. Don't use *vague* words

(if someone is "involved" in the crime, did they commit it or are they the victim?)
6. Don't use *weasel* words
    (If a rape occurred, be specific ... call it a rape, not an "attack")
7. Don't use *windy* words
    - Find the simple synonym
    - "commence" becomes "start"
    - "city" for "metropolis"
    - "use" instead of "utilize"
8. Don't use *weary* words
    - A weary word is one that's been "used up"
    - "Controversy" and "controversial" are two examples
9. Don't use *wrong* words
    - Ensure you know what a word means before you use it
    - A "dilemma" is two alternatives, equally undesirable, not a problem, plight, or predicament
10. Don't use foreign words and phrases
    (Many people have a hard enough time understanding English)
11. Don't resort to clichés
    - One cliché is not worth a thousand words
    - Do the police really "have their work 'cut out' for them"?
    - Do people really "'huddle' behind closed doors'"?
12. Don't stretch for synonyms for words that are easily understood
    - Even if it does mean using the same word twice in a story, or even a sentence
    - Do "explains" and "says" really mean the same?
13. Don't "hotrod"
    ("Hotrodding" is "high power" writing)

"TOP TIPS OF THE TRADE":

1. Start strong. "Well begun is half done."
   (Your first words may determine if your listeners keep listening)
2. Read — and understand — your source copy.
   (Ensure you understand something BEFORE you use it)
3. Underline or circle key facts.
   (Allows you to instantly see what's important & keep track of important facts)
4. Don't write yet. Think.
   (Take time to think — even if it's just for 30 seconds)
5. Write the way you talk – unless you're from the Bronx!
   (Use straight forward manner, without zigzags)
6. Apply the rules for broadcast newswriting.
   (Don't try to cram the five "w's" up front)
7. Have the *courage* to write simply.
8. Refrain from wordy windups.
   (Tell your stories; don't write them)
9. Put attribution before assertion.
   (Let your listeners know who's behind the assertions at the outset)
10. Go with S-V-O: subject—verb—object.
    (That's the way we speak)
11. Limit a sentence to one idea.
    (This helps reduce difficult, complex stories to their essence)
12. Use short words and short sentences.
    (The words most of us use most frequently are short)
13. Use familiar words in familiar combinations.
    (That's the way the audience is accustom to hearing them)
14. People-ize your copy.
    (Write about *people*, not *personnel* ... people want to hear about people)
15. Activate your copy.
    (Use verbs that move (action verbs) and avoid passive voice)
16. Avoid a first sentence whose main verb is any form of "to be."
    (It conveys no action)
17. Avoid *may, might, could, should, seems.*
    (These linking verbs are even weaker than the "to be" family)
18. Put your sentences in a positive form.
    (Accentuate the positive ... try to avoid "no" and "not")
19. Use present tense verbs where appropriate.
    (The verb that you can most often use in the present tense is *say)*
20. Don't start with a quotation or a question.
    (Your listener may think the words are your own)

21. Use connectives — *and, also, but, so, because* — to link sentences.

(This makes it easier to follow the thread of your story)

22. Put the word or words you want to emphasize at the end of your sentence.

(A word placed at the sentence's end gains emphasis and is remembered)

23. Use contractions — with caution.

(They're conversational, but may cause confusion, e.g., *can't*, which might be heard as *can*.)

24. Pep up your copy with words like *new, now, but, says.*

(They signal a listener he's hearing news and can compress a mouthful into one word)

25. Watch out for *I, we, our, here, up, down.*

(They can confuse)

26. Omit needless words.

(You can often delete words with no loss in meaning and gain clarity)

27. Hit only the main points; trash the trivia.

(Ensure every word you use is essential)

28. Don't parrot source copy.

(Rewrite news stories in your own words)

29. Place the time element, if you need one, *after* the verb.

30. When in doubt, leave it out.

(Deal only in facts, not in conjecture)

31. Don't raise questions you don't answer.

(Don't include a fact that is unclear)

32. Read your copy aloud. If it sounds like writing, rewrite it.

(What matters is how your copy sounds, not how it looks on paper)

33. Rewrite. The art of writing lies in rewriting what you've already written.

(Check facts; get rid of clutter; ensure the words are in the right order, etc.)

Writing for Radio Skills Reference Guide

All writing products:
- 60-character line, normal character spacing, double spaced, all caps, Courier New font, 12-pitch.
- Three spaces from heading to "<u>ANNOUNCER</u>."
- One full line equals four seconds of copy.
- Admin block contains: rank and full name, class number, page X of X.
- Heading contains: slugline, date product was written, product length in seconds.
- "Dunphies" or "- more -" at bottom of each page.

Reader Spots:
- ◊ "Kill" date in heading below date written.
- ◊ 30-seconds in length equals 7-8 lines of copy.
- ◊ Attention step.
- ◊ If a "sell" spot, include action step.

Produced spots:
- ♦ "Info" or "sell" and target audience in admin block.
- ♦ "Kill" date in heading below date written.
- ♦ Total spot length 28-30 seconds or 55-60 seconds, including non-voice elements.
- ♦ Non-voice elements underlined.
- ♦ Attention step.
- ♦ If a "sell" spot, include action step.
- ♦ Reference line after "Dunphies."
- ♦ Slugline of three words max (no verbs)

Radio News products:
- Release line in heading.
- Slugline of ten words max (doubles as tease).
- Post paper story is 60-seconds, 14-16 lines.
- Local News Fact Sheet story is 45-60 seconds, including soundbite.
- Formally identify speaker before soundbite.
- Set up soundbite by paraphrasing ... avoid "echoing" the bite.
- Informal ID of speaker following soundbite.
- Triple space before and after soundbite information.
- One additional fact in "snapper" following soundbite.

........./........./........./........./........./........./

NORTON HELICOPTER CRASH KILLS   1 NOV 2003
20 AIRMEN

(30 SECONDS)   FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<u>ANNOUNCER</u>

A HELICOPTER CRASH AT NORTON AIR FORCE BASE HAS KILLED 20 AIRMEN

AND INJURED NINE OTHERS. THE MILITARY AIRCRAFT WAS CARRYING MEN

AND WOMEN FOR TRAINING IN ARIZONA WHEN IT WENT DOWN IN A WOODED

AREA NORTH OF THE RUNWAY EARLY THIS MORNING. THE VICTIMS ARE AIR

FORCE RESERVISTS ASSIGNED TO CALIFORNIA'S AIR NATIONAL GUARD.

AIR GUARD OFFICIALS WILL RELEASE THE NAMES OF THE DEAD AND

INJURED AIRMEN AFTER NOTIFYING THEIR FAMILIES. THE AIR FORCE IS

INVESTIGATING THE CRASH.

# # #

........./........./........./........./........./........./

COLLEGE MASCOT   1 APR 2002

(60 SECONDS)   FOR GENERAL RELEASE

<u>ANNOUNCER</u>

MANY PEOPLE ENVY THE EAGLE AS IT FLOATS AMONG THE CLOUDS, FREE

FROM THE BONDS OF GRAVITY. BUT AN R-O-T-C STUDENT AT FLINT'S

125TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT LOOKS TO A FLIGHTLESS BIRD FOR

INSPIRATION. SERGEANT THOMAS MANN MASQUERADES AS AN EMU (EE-

MYOO) AT EASTERN MICHIGAN SPORTING EVENTS. WHY CHOOSE A LARGE

FLIGHTLESS BIRD AS A MASCOT? WELL, THE EMU'S NAME SPELLS OUT THE

SCHOOL'S NAME ABBREVIATED, E-M-U. AND TOM DOESN'T FIND IT ODD TO

DRESS UP AS A GROUNDED BIRD EVEN THOUGH HE IS AN AIRBORNE

QUALIFIED SOLDIER. THE MASQUERADE BEGAN WHEN INJURY GROUNDED

TOM'S PAL – THE ORIGINAL EMU – JUST BEFORE AN IMPORTANT GAME.

THE SHOW COULDN'T GO ON WITHOUT THE COLLEGE MASCOT SO TOM SLIPPED

INTO THE POLYESTER FEATHERS AND PLASTIC BEAK AND A NEW EMU WAS

HATCHED. TOM SAYS HE DOESN'T ENVY THE EAGLES, FLOATING ABOVE THE

EARTH ... HE CAN DO THAT ANYTIME BENEATH A BILLOWING PARACHUTE.

INSTEAD, A FLIGHTLESS BIRD INSPIRES HIM TO TAKE THE FIELD AND

"SOAR" AS A COLLEGE MASCOT.

                        # # #

........./........./........./........./........./........./

SENATE PROPOSES CHANGE TO G-I   1 MAY 2001
BILL DOLLARS

(60 SECONDS)   FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<u>ANNOUNCER</u>:

THE SENATE HAS PROPOSED A CHANGE TO THE AMOUNT SERVICE MEMBERS

CONTRIBUTE TO THE MONTGOMERY G-I BILL. ACCORDING TO THE BASE

PAPER, THE SENATE VETERANS COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED SERVICE

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE 133 DOLLARS A MONTH INSTEAD OF THE CURRENT 100

DOLLARS. THE COMMITTEE SAYS THE INCREASE WOULD SAVE 933-MILLION

DOLLARS OVER SEVEN YEARS. DEFENSE OFFICIALS SAY THEY FEAR THE

INCREASE COULD DAMAGE AN ALREADY DIFFICULT RECRUITING PROCESS.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF TOLD THE COMMITTEE THE

MONTGOMERY G-I BILL IS THE BEST RECRUITING TOOL THE SERVICES

HAVE. ADMIRAL JAMES MORRISON ASKED THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE

PROGRAM "AS IS." HE SAYS THE PROGRAM IS A COST-EFFECTIVE

RECRUITING INCENTIVE THAT ATTRACTS TOP-QUALITY MEN AND WOMEN TO

THE SERVICES. NINETY-FOUR PERCENT OF RECRUITS ENTERING MILITARY

SERVICE ENROLL IN THE G-I BILL PROGRAM.

# # #

........./........./........./........./........./........./

COMMAND TO INCREASE MEDICAL   1 AUG 2000
PROVIDERS AT YONG-SAN

(60 SECONDS)   FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCER:

YONG-SAN'S MEDICAL CENTER WILL SOON SEE AN INCREASE IN PROVIDERS.

THE COMMAND IS RE-FILLING 57 MEDICAL AND DENTAL POSITIONS CUT IN

THE DRAW-DOWN FIVE YEARS AGO. PATIENTS BEGAN COMPLAINING ABOUT

DIFFICULTIES SCHEDULING ROUTINE APPOINTMENTS AFTER THE STAFF WAS

CUT. MEDICAL CENTER CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR ARMY MAJOR ART WEBB SAYS

THE NEW DOCTORS, DENTISTS, AND TECHNICIANS WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

   SOUNDBITE

INCUE: "IT WILL TAKE..."

RT: :12

OUTCUE: "...THOSE HIGHER LEVELS."

ANNOUNCER:

MAJOR WEBB SAID THE NEW PROVIDERS WILL ARRIVE DURING THE NEXT

FISCAL YEAR. FOR A-F-N NEWS, I'M AIRMAN PATRICIA HOOVER.

                         # # #

........./........./........./........./........./........./

SOFTBALL LEAGUE   15 APR 2002

(30 SECONDS)   KILL DATE: 12 MAY

<u>ANNOUNCER</u>:

IT'S TIME TO STRETCH THOSE MUSCLES AND START GETTING IN SHAPE!

THE BASE INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL SEASON STARTS MAY 19TH. THE LEAGUE

NEEDS AT LEAST 12 FULL TEAMS BEFORE IT CAN SCHEDULE GAMES FOR THE

SEASON. MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL RANKS ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN THEIR

UNIT TEAM. GAMES TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY AND THURSDAY EVENINGS.

THE SEASON LASTS EIGHT WEEKS. PICK UP FORMS OR GET MORE

INFORMATION AT THE FITNESS CENTER. JOIN THE FUN ... SIGN UP

TODAY!

# # #

........./........./........./........./........./........./

DANTES TESTING   1 APR 2001

(60 SECONDS)   KILL DATE: NONE

MUSIC: MEDIUM TEMPO JAZZ:

ESTABLISH 2-3 SECONDS, THEN UNDER ANNOUNCER TO CHEERING SFX

ANNOUNCER:

GRADUATING FROM A MILITARY TRAINING SCHOOL CAN ALSO MEAN

GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE. THE BASE EDUCATION CENTER OFFERS

"DANTES," THE DEFENSE ACTIVITY FOR NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

SUPPORT. DANTES HELPS YOU GET COLLEGE CREDIT FOR THINGS YOU

ALREADY KNOW. THE PROGRAM PROVIDES COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION

PROGRAM, OR "CLEP," TESTS. CLEP TESTS ARE

90-MINUTE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS THAT COVER SUBJECTS NORMALLY

TAUGHT IN A SEMESTER OF COLLEGE. EACH TEST EARNS UP TO SIX

SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT. YOU CAN TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE IN A WIDE

VARIETY OF SUBJECTS, FROM MATH OR MUSIC TO SCIENCE AND

MANAGEMENT. IT'S TO YOUR "CREDIT" TO ACT NOW!

SOUND: CHEERING:

ESTABLISH 2-3 SECONDS, THEN FADE UNDER ANNOUNCER TO "EXPECTED"

WITH DANTES' HELP, YOU COULD BE CHEERING ABOUT A COLLEGE DEGREE

SOONER THAN YOU EXPECTED.

# # #

REFERENCE: USAFPP 250-21 9-79

.........../........../........./........./........../........./

SOFTBALL SEASON   1 APR 2001

(30 SECONDS)   KILL DATE: 12 MAY

SOUND: BASEBALL BEING HIT, CROWD CHEERS:

FADE INTO MUSIC

MUSIC: UPBEAT POP-ROCK:

ESTABLISH 2 SECONDS, THEN UNDER ANNOUNCER TO NEXT SFX

ANNOUNCER:

SPRING IS IN THE AIR, AND SO ARE THE SOFTBALLS. THE POST

INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL SEASON STARTS MAY 19TH. MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL

RANKS ARE WELCOME TO SIGN UP. CALL THE FITNESS CENTER AT 5-4-5-6

TO FIND OUT MORE. IF YOUR UNIT DOESN'T HAVE A TEAM, THE FOLKS AT

THE FITNESS CENTER WILL FIND YOU ONE.

SOUND: VOICE YELLING "SAFE!", CROWD CHEERING:

UNDER ANNOUNCER UNTIL "ACTION"

GET A PIECE OF THE SPORTS ACTION. CALL 54-56 AND SIGN UP TODAY!

                              # # #

REFERENCE: MSG BRITT REID, CHIEF, MWR DIVISION, EXT. 5455

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........./........./........./........./........./........./
COMMUNITY UPDATE                                    24 SEP 2001

(60 SECONDS)                          FOR GENERAL RELEASE


ANNOUNCER:

THE RED CROSS OFFERS AN ORIENTATION FOR ALL NEW VOLUNTEERS EVERY

TUESDAY AT THE RECREATION CENTER.  CALL 3-9-1-3 FOR MORE

INFORMATION, INCLUDING HOW TO RESERVE FREE CHILD CARE.


THE FITNESS CENTER IS FORMING AN INTRAMURAL RACQUETBALL LEAGUE.

THERE ARE NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED CATEGORIES.  CALL

THE FITNESS CENTER TO SIGN UP.


REGISTER NOW FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND'S 2ND TERM.  CLASSES

BEGIN SEPTEMBER 30TH.  FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE U-M BRANCH,

OR STOP BY THE EDUCATION CENTER.


THE TOUR AND TRAVEL OFFICE OFFERS A NATURE-LOVERS'

BIRD-WATCHING TRIP SATURDAY MORNING FROM 6:00 TO 11:00.  CATCH

THE BUS AT THE RECREATION CENTER PARKING LOT.


"VOLCANO," STARRING TOMMY LEE JONES, PLAYS AT THE BASE THEATER

TONIGHT.  THIS "P-G-13" MOVIE STARTS AT 7:00.

                         # # #
```
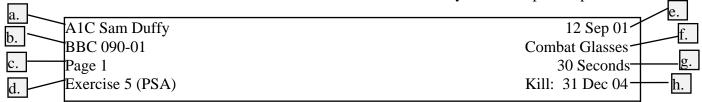
Example
Community Update: 2-3 lines per topic; 12-14 lines total; 20 words max per sentence; must have all 5 topics; always end with the movie.

Television Script Writing

a.

e.

A1C Sam Duffy   12 Sep 01

b.   f.

BBC 090-01   Combat Glasses

c.   g.

Page 1   30 Seconds

d.   h.

Exercise 5 (PSA)   Kill: 31 Dec 04

VIDEO	AUDIO
✓ NEWSCASTER shots (w/ or w/o graphics) are left to the director.	✓ Double-spaced.
✓ Show shot description and location on A/B roll tape.	✓ Triple-spaced **between** *video* shots.
✓ Shots should average 3-7 seconds (unless otherwise motivated), tell the story, and demonstrate basic cinematic concepts.	✓ Average of 35 characters per line.
✓ EJ News Stories contain at least one	✓ 14-16 lines equals 28 to 30 seconds of script.
✓ 3-shot sequence (LS, MS, CU).	✓ Production notes <u>underlined</u> (e.g. <u>SOUNDBITE (10 SECONDS)</u>, <u>STANDUP (12 SECONDS)</u>, <u>MUSIC: UP & UNDER ANNOUNCER).</u>
✓ Standup is an LS (feet to headroom) or an MS (waist to headroom) shot in a location that compliments the story. Can be sitting, standing, or walking.	✓ Put Natural (NAT) sound under all narration **with** video. (Exception, PSAs/Spots: CH 1=Primary Narration; CH 2=NATsound or Music.)
	✓ Soundbites & Standups include first three and last three words.
	✓ Dunphys (# # #) centered under text to denote **end** of story.
	✓ <u>NO</u> split sentences between pages.

Television Script Writing

While TV script formats or headings may vary slightly from station to station, the basic elements are the same. This two-column set-up is the format you must use at DINFOS. You may want to personalize it in the field.

READER SCRIPT: This format allows your viewer to see the newscaster as he reads the script. The newscaster (on-camera) is your "video" source; the script is the "audio." Average DINFOS length is 30-45 seconds.

- You must refer to the source of the script at the bottom of the last page [e.g. REFERENCE: "SOURCE TITLE" MMM DD, YYYY, PAGE # (ARTICLE TITLE)]

VOICE-OVER SCRIPT (a.k.a. "V-O"): The newscaster's voice (AUDIO column) is heard "over" the pictures on the screen (VIDEO column). The newscaster is usually seen first – while reading the lead to the story – then is "covered over" by the supporting video. The newscaster then "reappears" to read the close. Average DINFOS length is 30-45 seconds.

VOICE-OVER-SOUND-ON-TAPE-SCRIPT (a.k.a. "VOSOT"): A V-O with a sound bite (usually a short piece of an on-camera interview). Average DINFOS length is 45-60 seconds.

> **NOTE (V-Os & VOSOTs):** Because the person who writes the script is often not the same person who shoots the video, the script cannot depend on the video.

STUDIO LEAD-IN: The introduction to an **Electronic Journalism News Story** package read "live" by the newscaster in the studio (average DINFOS length is 10-15 seconds). DO NOT use "(MORE)" or "# # #" after the Studio Lead-In.

C.G. FOR SOUND BITE INFO (on the bottom half of the STUDIO LEAD-IN): Contains the rank, name, and title of the sound bite (in accordance with proper military style – upper and lower case – as appropriate) and the IN and OUT points of the bite in the package. Not needed for video-precedes sound bites.

ELECTRONIC JOURNALISM NEWS STORY: A pre-produced news package narrated by a field reporter. Includes one or two sound bites and a reporter standup. DINFOS length is 60 or 90 seconds.

PSA/SPOT SCRIPT: A **P**ublic **S**ervice **A**nnouncement narrated by a field reporter that is accompanied by NAT sound (sound occurring "naturally" at the site of the shoot) or music. DINFOS length is 30 seconds.

VIDEO	AUDIO
NEWSCASTER	THE U-S ARMY SOLDIER SYSTEMS COMMAND HAS COME UP WITH A SOLUTION TO AN AGE OLD COMBAT PROBLEM. THE COMMAND IS GIVING SPECIAL PROTECTIVE EYE-WEAR PRODUCTS TO SOLDIERS TO PROTECT THEM FROM BALLISTIC THREATS SUCH AS LASERS, ROCKS, AND SHELL FRAGMENTS. OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT IN THE NEXT WAR, EYE INJURIES WILL ACCOUNT FOR TEN PERCENT OF THE DEATHS. SOLDIERS CAN USE THE GLASSES FOR LOW LIGHT, NON-LASER SITUATIONS, SUN PROTECTION, AND DAY AND NIGHT LASER DEFENSE. THE U-S ARMY IS THE FIRST IN THE WORLD TO GIVE SOLDIERS EYE PROTECTION.
	# # #
REFERENCE: "SOUND OFF" MAY 16, 1996, PAGE 8 (HI TECH GLASSES)	

_____

NOTE: Select "tab" to leave current row and go to page two. When you get to page two, select "table" from the pull-down menu, then select "split table" and insert heading information. You must be inside the second row to properly insert text.

LS STUDENT AT COMPUTER (01:35)	<u>MUSIC: UP & UNDER ANNOUNCER</u> LOOKING FOR INFORMATION? CHECK OUT THE INTERNET.
MS COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN (02:05)	BUT BEWARE ... SOME INTERNET INFORMATION IS OFF LIMITS.
CU STUDENT TYPING ON COMPUTER (LIGHTING CHANGES TO RED) (03:00)	DON'T VENTURE INTO THE DARK SIDE OF THE INTERNET, ESPECIALLY TO HOME PAGES WITH SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL.
CU KEYBOARD (03:43)	YOU MAY BE ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THESE SITES, BUT THE COMMANDANT HAS PLACED THEM OFF LIMITS.
ECU COMPUTER SCREEN (04:15)	ALL DINFOS COMPUTERS KEEP A LOG OF THE SITES YOU VISIT ... A LOG OFFICIALS COULD USE TO TRACK YOU DOWN.

(MORE)

CU STUDENT'S FACE (STRIP LIGHTING ON FACE) (04:37)	BE SURE TO PULL THE PLUG ON BAD NET SURFING HABITS ...
CU COMPUTER MONITOR (PICTURE BLURS AND TURNS TO STATIC) (05:12)	BEFORE SOMEONE PULLS THE PLUG ON YOU. KNOW AND OBEY DINFOS INTERNET RULES.
	<u>MUSIC: FADE UP AND OUT TO TIME</u>

# # #

NOTE: Select "tab" to leave current row and go to page two. When you get to page two, select "table" from the pull-down menu, then select "split table" and insert heading information. You must be inside the second row to properly insert text.

LS SOLDIER AT COMPUTER (16:23) MS COMPUTER (16:55)	SOME MAY THINK MILITARY TRAINING IS ONLY WEAPONS AND COMBAT, BUT THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY SO AT THE DEFENSE INFORMATION SCHOOL.
CU COMPUTER SCREEN/CURSOR (17:20) LS CLASSROOM AND STUDENTS (20:20)	DINFOS TRAINS THE NATION'S MILITARY JOURNALISTS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS – ALL PEOPLE WHO DEPEND GREATLY ON ONE WEAPON OF CHOICE … THE COMPUTER.
ECU SCREWDRIVER IN HAND (11:28)	IN FACT, DINFOS RECEIVED 102 PENTIUM COMPUTERS JUST LAST WEEK.
MS ASSISTANT WORKING (09:11) LS ROOM FULL OF COMPUTERS (14:11)	WORKERS FROM THE INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE BEGAN DISTRIBUTING THE COMPUTERS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YESTERDAY.

(MORE)

JO1 Jerry Rakker Reporting	STANDUP (15 SECS) IN CUE: "THE IMPACT OF…" OUT CUE: "…CLASSROOM AS WELL."
MS COMPUTERS ROLLED INTO ROOM (04:10) CU TAKING COMPUTER OUT OF BOX (15:05) MS PLACING COMPUTER ON DESK (16:19)	I-R-M WORKERS ARE DISTRIBUTING THE 290-THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF COMPUTERS TO DINFOS STAFFERS WITHOUT COMPUTERS, OR THOSE USING THREE-86 OR LOWER TECHNOLOGY.
Maj Mark Meaders IRM Manager (01:28)	SOUND BITE (15 SECS) IN: "WE'VE GOT TO…" OUT: "…PEOPLE OUT THERE."
CU VACUM CLEANER WAND (30:16) MS MEADERS & ASSISTANT WORKING (31:09)	THE SCHOOL PLANS TO ACQUIRE MORE PENTIUM COMPUTERS, INCLUDING THE NEWEST COMPUTER ON THE MARKET … THE P-6.

(MORE)

CU COMPUTER SCREEN
(07:23)
MS TECH WORKING ON COMPUTER
(08:14)

WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, THE GOAL
IS TO HAVE ENOUGH COMPUTERS TO
ENSURE ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS HAVE
THE BEST THAT TECHNOLOGY HAS TO
OFFER.

LS CLASSROOM FULL OF COMPS
(12:01)

REPORTING FOR A-F-N SIGONELLA, I'M
PETTY OFFICER JERRY RAKKER.

# # #

AIR FORCE

GRADE	ABBR.	FORMAL	INFORMAL
E1	AB	AIRMAN BASIC	AIRMAN
E2	AMN	AIRMAN	AIRMAN
E3	A1C	AIRMAN FIRT CLASS	AIRMAN
E4	SrA	SENIOR AIRMAN	AIRMAN
E5	SSgt	STAFF SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E6	TSgt	TECHNICAL SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E7	MSgt	MASTER SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E8	SMSgt	SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E9	CMSgt	CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT	CHIEF
O1	2D Lt	SECOND LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O2	1st Lt	FIRST LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O3	Capt	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
O4	Maj	MAJOR	MAJOR
O5	Lt Col	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL
O6	Col	COLONEL	COLONEL
O7	BRIG Gen	BRIGADIER GENERAL	GENERAL
O8	Maj Gen	MAJOR GENERAL	GENERAL
O9	Lt Gen	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL
O10	Gen	GENERAL	GENERAL

ARMY

GRADE	ABBR.	FORMAL	INFORMAL
E1	PVT	PRIVATE BASIC	PRIVATE
E2	PV2	PRIVATE SECOND CLASS	PRIVATE
E3	PFC	PRIVATE FIRT CLASS	PRIVATE
E4	SPC	SPECIALIST	SPECIALIST
E5	SGT	SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E6	SSG	STAFF SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E7	SFC	SERGEANT 1ST CLASS	SERGEANT
E8	MSG	MASTER SERGEANT/1ST SERGEANT (1SG)	SERGEANT/1ST SERGEANT
E9	SGM	SERGEANT MAJOR/COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (CSM)	SERGEANT MAJ/COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
O1	2LT	SECOND LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O2	1LT	FIRST LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O3	CPT	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
O4	MAJ	MAJOR	MAJOR
O5	LTC	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL
O6	COL	COLONEL	COLONEL
O7	BG	BRIGADIER GENERAL	GENERAL
O8	MG	MAJOR GENERAL	GENERAL
O9	LTG	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL
O10	GEN	GENERAL	GENERAL

MARINES

GRADE	ABBR.	FORMAL	INFORMAL
E1	Pvt	PRIVATE	PRIVATE
E2	PFC	PRIVATE FIRST CLASS	PFC
E3	LCpl	LANCE CORPORAL	LANCE CORPORAL
E4	Cpl	CORPORAL	CORPORAL
E5	Sgt	SERGEANT	SERGEANT
E6	SSgt	STAFF SERGEANT	STAFF SERGEANT
E7	GySgt	GUNNERY SERGEANT	GUNNERY SERGEANT
E8	MSgt/ 1stSgt	MASTER SERGEANT/1ST SERGEANT	MASTER SERGEANT/1ST SERGEANT
E9	SgtMaj/ MGySgt	SERGEANT MAJOR/MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT	SERGEANT MAJOR/MASTER GUNS
O1	2ndLt	SECOND LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O2	1stLt	FIRST LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O3	Capt	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
O4	Maj	MAJOR	MAJOR
O5	LtCol	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	COLONEL
O6	Col	COLONEL	COLONEL
O7	BGen	BRIGADIER GENERAL	GENERAL
O8	MajGen	MAJOR GENERAL	GENERAL
O9	LtGen	LIEUTENANT GENERAL	GENERAL
O10	Gen	GENERAL	GENERAL

NAVY

GRADE	ABBR.	FORMAL	INFORMAL
E1	SR	SEAMAN RECRUIT	SEAMAN
E2	SA	SEAMAN APPRENTICE	SEAMAN
E3	SN	SEAMAN	SEAMAN
E4	PO3	PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS	PETTY OFFICER
E5	PO2	PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS	PETTY OFFICER
E6	PO1	PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS	PETTY OFFICER
E7	CPO	CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	CHIEF
E8	SCPO	SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	SENIOR CHIEF
E9	MCPO	MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER	MASTER CHIEF
O1	ENS	ENSIGN	ENSIGN
O2	LTJG	LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE	LIEUTENANT
O3	LT	LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
O4	LCDR	LIEUTENANT COMMANDER	COMMANDER
O5	CDR	COMMANDER	COMMANDER
O6	CAPT	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN
O7	RADM(LW)	REAR ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL
O8	RADM(UP)	REAR ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL
O9	VADM	VICE ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL
O10	ADM	ADMIRAL	ADMIRAL

1. Content
   a) Error in fact   (Major)   -25*
                         (Minor)   -15*
   b) Weak/illogical development (DEV)   -5
   c) Weak or non-localized slug or tease   -5
   d) Weak lead or attention step   -5
   e) Weak or no snapper or telling point   -5
   f) Unconversational copy   -5
   g) Lacks colorful treatment (spots/features)   -5
   h) Lack of original copy   -5*
   i) Action step missing or misplaced   -5
   j) Passive voice (PV)   -5*
   k) Omission of essential element (OEE)   -5*
   l) Unessential information included (UII)   -5*
   m) Speculation or requires attribution (SPEC)   -5*
   n) Clarity (Major)   -5*
   o) Grammar (Major)   -5*
   p) Non-voice element doesn't support narrative   -3*
   q) Poor sentence structure, grammar (minor), punctuation,
      word choice, contraction, clarity (minor), other   -2*

2. Timing
   a) Sentence length   -3*
   b) Non-voice elements over or under requirement   -3*
   c) Total copy length over or under requirement   -2
      (per second – 12 points maximum if over)

3. Spelling
   a) Proper name where error changes pronunciation   -15
      (example: JOHNSTON V. JOHNSON)
   b) Other names/words   -5

4. Mechanics
   a) Copy neatness   -5
   b) Non-voice elements not in proper format   -3*
   c) Line or character spacing   -2*
   d) Broadcast Writing Style Guide error   -2*

5. Other
   a) Failure to meet assigned deadline   -5
      (for every 5 minutes – maximum: -25)
   b) Failure to follow classroom, written or verbal, directions (FFI)   -5*
   c) Fails to meet information objective – repeat assignment   -25
      (includes sensitivities and security violations)
   d) Copying, libel, major sensitivity or security violation   -100
   *(*per occurrence)*

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